

# The Broad Street Journal

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## Public Education: Still Separate and Unequal

By Amanda Arbour

Urban Education Month focused our attention on a crucial issue facing this city. In Philadelphia only 55.5% of the students who enter high school graduate. Even those who remain in school are not learning basic skills: 73.1% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders score below proficient in math, and 66.9% score below proficient in reading.

Why are inner-city kids failing their tests and dropping out of school? Because they don't care about school? Because they don't have a supportive home environment? Because they live in areas dominated by the violent drug culture? Because they have learning disabilities or attention problems? The documentary *I Am a Promise*, which was shown on September 18th in the TV Lounge, focused on local Stanton Elementary School, and highlighted many of these issues. But although they certainly contribute to the urban education dilemma, they are not the primary cause. At the end of the film, it was not these challenges that caused the gifted principal to leave – it was the lack of resources and support from the School District of Philadelphia.

What it all comes down to is money. Some would scoff at this as oversimplifying a complex issue, saying that you can't just throw money at a problem. But when buildings are falling apart, textbooks are way out-of-date, classes are crammed with 30+ students, teachers are paid a pittance, and art and tech classes are non-existent, money really is the problem. It doesn't matter how

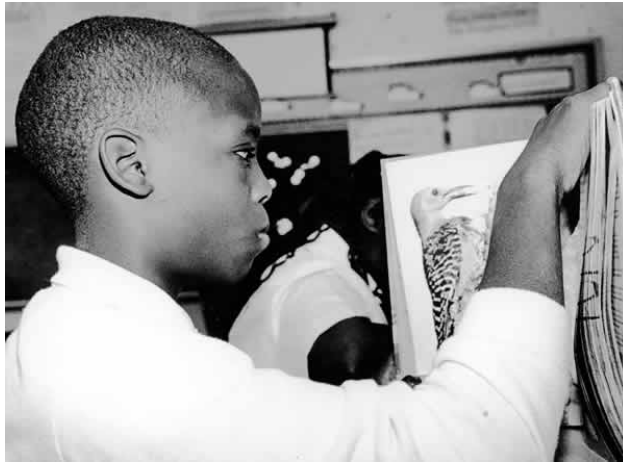


Image Courtesy of Google Images

dedicated the administrators and teachers are – when schools do not have adequate resources, the quality of education will suffer.

The way that schools are funded has created and perpetuated a very unequal education system. The states usually contribute about 50% of the funding, but the rest comes from local property taxes. Thus, inner-city schools where property values are low receive less funding, while suburban schools in wealthier areas get much more. For example, the Philadelphia School District has \$10,653.42 per pupil, while Lower Marion (just 8 miles away) has \$18,445.67 per pupil. In practical terms this means a teacher in Lower Marion has \$194,806.25 more for his or her classroom of 25 students than a teacher in Philadelphia. Is it surprising then that Lower Marion students have a lower dropout rate and higher test scores than Philadelphia students?

Compounding this is the No Child Left Behind Act. Although its intention was laudable, it imposed impossibly high standards without providing any funding. It is ludicrous to expect struggling Philadelphia schools to meet the same standards as well-off Lower Merion schools by sheer force of will. Yet when school districts like Philadelphia fail to achieve the impossible,

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## Fork: Twirling into Perfection

By Melissa Paolangeli

Restaurant Week is the ideal time for sophisticated palates on a college budget to dine in style without causing too much financial damage. When the city offers three course meals at some of its finest and most popular restaurants for \$30, high taste and low budgets are whisked together in perfect harmony. Participating restaurants run from the classic Ruth's Chris Steakhouse to the chic Bliss, both featuring entrees over and above \$30 on normal dinner menus. One participating restaurant in particular has critics from prestigious magazines such as *Food & Wine*, *Bon Appetit* and *Wine Spectator* raving about its "revolution in good taste."

Fork is one of many trendy restaurants lining Market Street, beckoning a young professional crowd in with stylish ambiance and old city charm. Once in the doors, soft lighting flowing from suspended lamps brightens warm, amber walls and provides a romantic, candle-like atmosphere.

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### Fork Recap

306 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA  
215-625-9425  
www.forkrestaurant.com  
Price: \$\$ (Dinner \$17 - \$30); Fork, etc. \$ (\$2-\$8)  
Cuisine: American Bistro  
Dress: Upscale, but casual  
Note: Reservations recommended for lunch and dinner  
Nearest SEPTA: Broad Street Line South to Market Frankford, 2nd Street station

# Community

## Rilo Kiley Concert at the Troc

*As Advertised in Discover This Week*

By Erin Hayes

Indie folk-turned-glam rock band Rilo Kiley graced the stage of the Trocadero Theatre (affectionately called 'the Troc' by some) at 11<sup>th</sup> and Arch Tuesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. Having just released their latest album, the hype leading up to the show was intense, and expectations were high.

Opening band Art in Manila filled the first hour of the show with some original tunes as the audience, perhaps out of anticipatory energy or simply because the two chic front girls provided pedestrian entertainment, cheered respectfully.

Band number two, Grand Ole Party, followed, taking die-hard Rilo Kiley fans' minds off their already aching feet as they staked out their floor-space territory. Leading lady Kristin sat behind her drum set and head set mic, between back-up boys Mike and John Paul. Kristin banged percussive melodies and belted precious funky beats while the guys accompanied on their guitars and occasionally chimed in harmonic background vocals.

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Image Courtesy of Google Images

## Giuliani Says "Yes" to Cheese

*Presidential Candidate Visits Geno's to Discuss Immigration*

By Diana Ecker

When it comes to cheese steaks, Rudy Giuliani does not take hand-outs. That's right, he paid full price on Monday night for his cheese steak at Geno's in South Philadelphia. In fact, Philadelphia Republican Mayor Candidate Al Taubenberg seemed quite excited as he informed the local news anchors with a detailed recollection of the cheese steak Giuliani ordered during his pit-stop publicity-appearance on the way to another political function.

There is nothing ironic about an out-of-towner traveling to the world famous stand for a delicious (?) heart attack in a roll. However, there is a bit of irony when an influential Republican candidate who has recently made a strong stance on illegal immigration makes a stop at the stand infamous for a little sign in the window that reads: "This is America. When Ordering Please Speak English."

Hearing of this appearance, I was forced by my better judgment to skip community gathering with my roommate so we could catch a glimpse, and maybe a word or two from the Grand Old Party's representative.

In short, we caught a glimpse- for about 45 seconds. During this time Giuliani walked out of the Geno's kitchen signed a book, and climbed into the backseat of a Cadillac Escalade. Although I didn't hear a word from the former mayor of New York City, a writer from the Associated Press caught a few. "Immigration is the best thing we have going for us. We need new people. We need people who are going to inform us, give us new ideas,



*Photograph by Diana Ecker*

but it has to be legal. Illegal immigration is a bad thing."

Maybe I should have done more research, but to my knowledge, there are no presidential candidates who are public advocates of any illegal activity, immigration included. Who will disagree with him on that?

On the other hand, I have no problem disagreeing with a sign that implies a negative, segregating or hateful attitude toward a specific group of people. There's an old saying I learned as a child (and avid reader of the American Girl books). "Actions speak louder than words." I have the opinion that in politics, actions scream. So what did Mr. Giuliani yell when he walked out of the kitchen that night?

### Keys to Staying Politically Active

*Make Sure you are Registered to Vote*  
So fundamental, but so overlooked. Make sure you register in time for any upcoming elections.

#### *Pay Attention to Debates*

It is the easiest way to learn a candidate's stance on various issues. After all, that is the purpose of a debate.

#### *Read*

Newspapers, magazines, and blogs all offer insight into politicians and elections that can be missed at a debate.



Image Courtesy of [forkrestaurant.com](http://forkrestaurant.com)

## Fork

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The decor is elegant but not too trendy, subtly drawing from nature by highlighting greens and neutral tans and browns with palm branches and various plants.

The natural look and feel of the restaurant carries over onto the impressive menu. Menu choices are paired with the fresh ingredients and include generous amounts of fruits and vegetables. The Restaurant Week menu is no exception, and allows the diner to select an appetizer, entree and dessert in any combination desired.

Starters include the Romaine Salad, a delightful mix of fresh romaine lettuce, sungold tomatoes, feta cheese and kalamata olives, topped with butternut squash croutons and shallot-mustard vinaigrette. The croutons are a surprisingly pleasing soft texture and pair nicely with the well-seasoned vinaigrette. Other options on the lighter fare menu include Tropical Fruit Gazpacho with Avocado, and Penne Pasta tossed with eggplant, leeks, spinach, parmigiano reggiano, fresh mozzarella and a sun-dried tomato pesto sauce.

Standing out on the dinner menu is the Grilled Brick Pressed Fennel and Parsley Marinated “Free-Range” Chicken. The parsley and fennel marinade highlights the tender half-chicken and blends well with sides of butternut squash mash and sautéed spinach. Another highlight on the dinner menu is the Duck Breast, served with braised vegetables, garlic mashed potatoes and topped with a lavish dark chocolate-vinegar sauce.

After the first two courses, dessert may seem nearly impossible, but it is worth every bite. Hands down, the most decadent item on the dessert menu

is the Flourless Chocolate Cake with Dulce de Leche and Whipped Cream. The chocolate is rich and pure, but not overpowering. For a lighter option, the Bittersweet Chocolate Mousse is light but luscious and is served with fresh raspberries and strawberries. The one dessert that was disappointing on the menu was the Chocolate Gelato, which promised an accompanying Rich Chocolate Brownie that was in actuality only about a square inch in size and lacked distinction in taste.

Making up for an unimpressive dessert is the warmth and personality of the owner, Ellen Yin, who mingles with diners and often serves and buses tables herself. She strives to make sure each diner feels welcomed and valued, and does so successfully. Her value of each customer carries over to the wait staff and gives the whole restaurant a positive atmosphere.

If you find yourself low on funds, yet cannot wait for Restaurant Week in the spring, Fork offer options for you. Fork, etc., the next-door bakery features café-style dining and is a self described “gourmet take-out.” The menu features specialty sandwiches such as tomato, mozzarella, prosciutto di parma and baby arugula for \$7.50, as well bread specials daily. Fork, etc. also offers weekly Bistro Wednesday’s which features four course meals specially prepared by Fork’s very own Chef Thien Ngo in an intimate setting for \$40.

Whether you wait all year for restaurant week, grab a gourmet sandwich at Fork, etc., join a Bistro Wednesday, or simply make reservations for a special night out on the town, Fork has something for the gourmet diner on any budget.



Image Courtesy of [forkrestaurant.com](http://forkrestaurant.com)

## Eastern Promises

By Devin Thomas

Why would director David Cronenberg choose to title his new London-based Russian mob drama *Eastern Promises*? Perhaps for its literal implications, as we gather from our murdered child-prostitute voice-over narrator, a Russian émigré: she came to London with high hopes of becoming a professional singer, a celebrity, and died pregnant and heroin-addicted before her fifteenth birthday. She lived entirely on promises. Unfulfilled promises.

Cronenberg’s hazy meditation on life and death, betrayal and loyalty, is filled with unfulfilled promises. Take Anna (Naomi Watts), a hospital midwife living with her widowed mother and boorish-but-fiercely-loyal ex-KGB uncle. We gather from an awkward dinner conversation that she moved out of her boyfriend’s flat after she miscarried their child. Now she spends her days haunted by other women’s children in the maternity ward of Trafalgar Hospital. That is, until she loses a patient—the above-mentioned child-prostitute named Tatiana—while rescuing her premature baby. After Tatiana’s death, Anna names her child Christina because, as Anna later tells her mother, “I have to call her something.” Or maybe the name Christina had been floating about in Anna’s head for some time.

Anna takes the dead girl’s diary, hoping to find some information about the girl’s family. But the book is written entirely in Russian—completely indecipherable to Anna without a translation. Inside she finds a card for the Trans-Siberian Restaurant, a ritzy upscale eatery; she takes the diary there. The proprietor, Seymon (Armin Mueller-Stahl), claims no knowledge of the dead girl but offers to translate the diary for Anna as a favor. Only after Anna’s uncle Stepan (Jerzy Skolimowski) translates for his niece a few key words—“mafia” and “prostitute” and “rape” among them—does Anna realize that her good deed

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# Urban Living



Images Courtesy of Collider.com

## Promises

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may come at a very personal price.

Enter Nikolai (Viggo Mortensen): imposing, threatening—the kind of man who can extinguish a cigarette with his tongue without experiencing pain of any kind. He’s a driver for mob boss Seymon and his vile son Kirill (Vincent Cassel), and he’s an enigma: an outsider trusted by the elite of a very secretive “society.” And yet he seems well on his way to acceptance: when Seymon cannot get the diary by conniving Anna, he turns to Nikolai. When Seymon needs someone to “take care of” Anna’s nosy uncle, he turns to Nikolai. Finally, it comes time for Nikolai’s testing. The mob bosses gather at Seymon’s restaurant and sit semi-circle around a vulnerable Nikolai, scrutinizing him and his myriad of tattoos. (Earlier, we learn the importance of these markings from a Scotland Yard investigator: “In Russian prisons, your life story is written on your body in tattoos. If you don’t have tattoos, you don’t exist.”) He passes their tests and receives the mark of the family: a five-point star on his shoulder and knee. Finally, it seems as though a promise will be fulfilled. But the last thirty minutes of the

film are the most important, and perhaps the most unsettling. Cronenberg teaches us to double-check our expectations, our presuppositions. The plot twists and turns, with director Cronenberg steering us to hate characters we once loved, or reconsider our feelings for those we despise. Just as he did in 2005’s *A History of Violence*, the director asks his

audience to engage his film with a discerning eye: where do we draw the line between right and wrong, good and evil? “I need to know who you are,” Anna tells Nikolai at one point. It is not a question, but a statement. Pay attention to the final shot of the film, and you might find yourself saying something very similar.

## Public Education

*Continued from page 1*

they are punished by having their funding cut – in effect taking money away from those that need it most. In a tragic irony, NCLB has not lived up to its name, and more and more children are being left behind.

As Messiah students, many of us attended privileged schools and were taught that anyone can “make it” if they just work hard enough. But poor education is not the fault of the inner-city students, parents, or teachers – it is a systemic problem. We must recognize that money matters, and that reforming the unequal funding mechanism is the necessary first step to improving education. Each student deserves the same opportunities, and our government needs to start keeping its promises to all of our children.

## Rilo Kiley

*Continued from page 2*

When the much anticipated feature act emerged, fans welcomed the familiar beginning single electric guitar notes of “It’s A Hit.” Jenny Lewis nonchalantly strolled about the stage as her soulful vocals filled the theatre.

Jenny’s voice, paired up with her glittery silver tights under short black shorts, easily could have diverted audience attention from the talent of bandmates Blake Sennett (formerly Joey on *Boy Meets World*), Pierre de Reeder, and Jason Boesel. But the rest of the band consistently played their part in the performance, quite literally giving Jenny something to sing about. The band did one number from their side project, *The Elected*, and Blake sang out on a better-than-the-album rendition of “Ripchord.”

Rilo Kiley’s act at the Troc is perhaps most praiseworthy for its perfect mix of oldest, old-ish, and brand new songs. Casual fans could appreciate prominent catchy numbers such as “Portions for Foxes” from 2004-released most popular album *More Adventurous*, and “Moneymaker,” off the hate-it-or-love-it newest record *Under the Blacklight*. The band did the new album tour job well, including the songs “Breaking Up,” “Close Call,” “15,” and even a quick tease at the title track from *Under the Blacklight*. They satisfied long-time fans with “Paint’s Peeling,” “With Arms Outstretched” (one that they’ll have a tough time to perform so well ever again), and “Spectacular Views.”

The encore, an obligatory element of any rock show today, felt just that way. They closed out the show with new track “Give a Little Love,” and ballad “Does He Love You?” before releasing the young Philadelphia fans onto the streets of Chinatown to smoke some cloves. The finale could hardly taint one’s impression of the show overall, though, as the band couldn’t have put on a more crowd-pleasing performance. Unsurprisingly, Rilo Kiley met all expectations.

**Be Sure to Attend *An Autumn Affair***  
**November 16, 2007,**  
**On board the Spirit of Philadelphia**

*Image Courtesy of Google Images*

